



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



Women with Disability Consultation Summary (Melbourne)

**Fourth Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce
Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022***

Summary of Consultation - 25 September 2018



Community engagement workshops facilitated by ThinkPlace, and
report written in collaboration between ThinkPlace and DSS.

*The Department of Social Services acknowledges
the traditional owners of country throughout
Australia, and their continuing connection to
land, water and community.*

*We pay our respects to them and their cultures,
and to Elders past, present and
emerging.*

About this document

This material was commissioned by the Commonwealth of Australia to assist in the collection of information from consultation sessions workshops around Australia. The purpose of this material is to summarise consultations held by the Department of Social Services as part of the development of the Fourth Action Plan. This session was facilitated by Sue Salthouse, Didactic Enterprises Pty Ltd.

The Department of Social Services thanks all participants of this discussion for their contributions as part of the development of the Fourth Action Plan. The views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect those of the Commonwealth, or indicate a particular course of action.

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Participants of Melbourne Consultation

Department of Social Services
First People's Disability Network of Australia
Children with Young People and Disability
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Office of the eSafety Commission
LaTrobe University
Migration Council
Office of the Disability Services Commission (ODSC) Victoria
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC)
Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV)
Southern Cross University (SCU)
Women's Information and Referral Exchange Inc (WIRE)
National Disability Services (NDS)
Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID)
Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA)
Victim Survivor Advocate



Key themes

Key themes

Knowing how to get to safety

- Services need to make people with disability feel safe and comfortable when they are trying to report or leave violent situations
- It can be hard for people with disability to leave unsafe homes when they have been modified for accessibility
- The person who is meant to be a family member or support worker can also be the person who is using violence against them. This can make it hard to find someone to report the violence to
- Some people with disability worry about not being able to access services if they report violence or leave the person using violence
- People with disability who have children worry that reporting violence could mean that their children are taken from them
- Not having money or a job, or not knowing how to manage money can stop people leaving violent relationships

Primary prevention and education that is accessible to people with disability

- Workers in both mainstream services and disability-specific services should know about domestic and family violence and be able to help women with disability who experience it
- Education and information is needed for children with disability to know about abusive behaviours and who to report them to
- Respectful Relationships education must be made accessible to young people with cognitive impairment or intellectual disability

Key themes

How organisations and support services respond to people with disability experiencing violence needs to change

- Disability support workers often do not know about domestic and sexual violence
- Disability support services and the National Disability Insurance Scheme need to understand domestic, family and sexual violence better
- Domestic, family and sexual violence workers often do not know about working with people with disability
- Plans for people with disability who have been abused need to be based on the experience a person has had. They should not follow the same approach for everyone
- Organisations need to know how to see when a carer/support worker is being violent to a person with disability
- Good examples of working with women with disability who have experienced violence should be shared across workers and organisations across Australia

- People with disability can use family and sexual violence. Organisations need to be able to work with these people to change their behaviour

Responses understand that people with disability are diverse

- Women with disability come from many different backgrounds (i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait, culturally and linguistically diverse, young people, older people). The way they are supported should understand this
- Not everyone has the same disability. Disability can be physical, intellectual, mental, developmental. Workers and the community should know this when they are supporting people with disability



Priority actions

Priority actions

Organisations that help people with disability

- Organisations that help women with disability who experience violence need the money they get to be able to be used on many things (i.e. flexible). They need to be able to link people with disability with the best service for their needs. This could be a mainstream or disability organisation
- More organisations should help people with disability that experience violence. Not just disability or domestic violence organisations (e.g. health, education). Workers in other areas should know how to help.
- More information is needed around how to report people that have abused women with disability, and where women with disability can go to get help
- Services to help women with disability experiencing violence need to be accessible (e.g. have ramps) and comfortable (e.g. welcoming and friendly)
- When workers are trained, they should be taught about both disability and family and sexual violence
- People with disability can live in many different places, including boarding houses with many people, and in smaller group houses with friends, with their families or alone. It is important to know this when making plans to help people with disability who have experienced violence. People may need different things
- More women with disability should work in the family violence workforce. Women with disability can feel more comfortable when they see other women with disability working in organisations.

Working with people with disability when making programs to help

- When people go to services for domestic, family and sexual violence, workers should understand that people are diverse (i.e. disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse, regional and remote)
- When making plans or providing support to people, it is really important that people with different backgrounds and abilities are involved
- Women with disability should be talked to when making a service to support them
- When the government gives money to organisations to help people who experience domestic violence, it should make sure they can explain how they will help people with disability as well

Priority actions

Awareness around family and sexual violence experienced by people with disability

- There should be more information about where to go when a woman with disability has experienced domestic, family or sexual violence
- The community should be aware of the rates of domestic, family violence and sexual violence against people with disability. People in the community should know what to do when they think a person with disability is being abused
- More surveys and statistics are needed to understand how many women with disability experience domestic, family and sexual violence
- Surveys and data should be collected in a way that is the same over the country, and easy to understand
- The Fourth Action Plan and other government documents should be able to be read or heard by all people. There should be easy read versions.

Primary prevention and education

- Respectful Relationships is a program that teaches young people about healthy relationships and what is not healthy. A version of this should be made for people with cognitive or intellectual disability and taught wherever they go to school
- More information is needed in the community around people with disability and the importance of respect.